MOFFAT
COLLECTION SYSTEM PROJECT
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

# Abstract

Photo provided courtesy of Denver Water.

MOFFAT
COLLECTION SYSTEM PROJECT
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

# Abstract

Photo provided courtesy of Denver Water.

☐ Legislative ☒ Executive

**COVER SHEET**
**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**MOFFAT COLLECTION SYSTEM PROJECT**

**Lead Agency**: Department of the Army
Corps of Engineers, Omaha District

**Jurisdictions in Colorado That Could be Directly Affected**: Denver County, Adams County, Boulder County, Jefferson County, Grand County, Summit County, Gilpin County, and Park County.

**Abstract:** This Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) evaluates the effects of a water supply project called the Moffat Collection System Project (Moffat Project). The Moffat Project would result in direct impacts to jurisdictional waters of the United States (U.S.), including wetlands. The placement of fill material in these waters of the U.S. for the construction of water storage and distribution facilities associated with developing additional water supplies requires authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The Applicant is the City and County of Denver, acting by and through its Board of Water Commissioners (Denver Water).

Denver Water proposes to enlarge its existing 41,811-acre foot (AF) Gross Reservoir by 77,000 AF (72,000 AF plus a 5,000 AF Environmental Pool[1]) to a total storage capacity of 118,811 AF. Gross Dam is located in Boulder County, Colorado, approximately 35 miles northwest of Denver and 6 miles southwest of the City of Boulder. The enlargement would be accomplished by raising the existing concrete gravity arch dam by 131 feet, from 340 to 471 feet high. The surface area of the reservoir would be expanded from approximately 418 acres to 842 acres. Using existing collection infrastructure, water from the Fraser River, Williams Fork River, and South Boulder Creek would be diverted and delivered during average to wet years via the Moffat Tunnel and South Boulder Creek to Gross Reservoir. There would be no additional diversions in dry years because Denver Water already diverts the maximum amount physically and legally available under its existing water rights without additional storage in its system. In order to firm this water supply and provide 18,000 AF per year of new firm yield, an additional 72,000 AF (not including the Environmental Pool) of storage capacity is necessary. To meet future demands, in most years, Denver Water would continue to rely on supplies from its entire integrated collection system. In a drought or emergency, Denver Water would rely on the additional water it would have previously stored in the Moffat Collection System to provide the additional 18,000 AF of yield.

The purpose of the Moffat Project is to develop 18,000 AF per year of new, annual firm yield to the Moffat Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and raw water customers upstream of the Moffat WTP pursuant to Denver Waters' commitment to its customers. Denver Water's need for the proposed Moffat Project is to address two major issues: (1) the overall near-term water supply shortage, and (2) the imbalance in water storage and supply between the North and South systems.

This Final EIS analyzes six alternatives for the Moffat Project: (1) Proposed Action (Alternative 1a) – Gross Reservoir Expansion (Additional 72,000 AF), (2) Alternative 1c – Gross Reservoir Expansion (Additional 40,700 AF)/New Leyden Gulch Reservoir (31,300 AF), (3) Alternative 8a – Gross Reservoir Expansion (Additional 52,000 AF)/Reusable Return Flows/Gravel Pit Storage (5,000 AF), (4) Alternative 10a – Gross Reservoir Expansion (Additional 52,000 AF)/Reusable Return Flows/Denver Basin Aquifer Storage (20,000 AF), (5) Alternative 13a – Gross Reservoir Expansion (Additional 60,000 AF)/Transfer of Agricultural Water Rights/Gravel Pit Storage (3,625 AF), and (6) No Action Alternative, which assumes that Denver Water would not receive approval from the Corps to implement the Moffat Project. Denver Water would rely upon a combination of strategies including using a portion of its Strategic Water Reserve and imposing mandatory restrictions to reduce demand during droughts.

**EIS Contact for Comments and Additional Information:** Rena Brand, Moffat EIS Project Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District
Denver Regulatory Office
9307 South Wadsworth Boulevard
Littleton, CO 80128
moffat.eis@usace.army.mil

**Date Final EIS Filed with EPA:** April 18, 2014.

**Date by Which Comments are Due:** June 9, 2014. Written comments should be received by close of business, 5 p.m.

[1] Denver Water is proposing to create an additional 5,000 AF of storage in Gross Reservoir, as mitigation, to enhance aquatic habitat in South Boulder Creek downstream of the reservoir. This additional storage would be filled with water provided by the cities of Boulder and Lafayette, and released for environmental flows. None of Denver Water's existing or future water supply would be stored in this 5,000 AF Environmental Pool.